A

SERMON

Preach'd before the

LORDS Spiritual and Temporal

IN

PARLIAMENT Aſſembled,

AT THE

Collegiate Church

OF

St. *Peter's Weſtminſter*,

On *Monday November* 5. 1722.

By the Right Reverend Father in GOD
JOSEPH, Lord Biſhop of *Gloceſter*.

Wilcox

LONDON:
Printed for JOHN NICKS, at the *White-Hart*
in St. *Paul's* Church-yard. 1722.

Wilcocks (7) 1 k
K

A

SERMON

Preached before the

LORDS Spiritual and Temporal

IN

PARLIAMENT Assembled,

AT THE

Collegiate Church

OF

St. Peter, Westminster,

On Monday, November 5, 1792.

BRITISH MUSEUM

By the Right Reverend Father in GOD

JOSEPH, Lord Bishop of Llandaff.

LONDON:

Printed for JOHN NICHOLS, at the Red-Lion,

in St. Paul's Church-yard. 1792.

PSALM cxi. 4.

The merciful and gracious Lord hath so done his marvellous Works, that they ought to be had in remembrance.

THE Subject of this, and some of the following Psalms, appears by the Title of them to be Praise and Thanksgiving, and it is likely they were composed by *David*, to be sung at divine Service on some of the more solemn Festivals. Several of these were observed in the *Jewish* Church, and the Design of those Anniversary Praises was to re-mind a forgetful People, prone to Ingratitude and Discontents, of the kind and signal Interposals of Providence in their behalf, to excite in them a more lively Sense of the Mercies conferred, and the Happiness they enjoyed, and consequently

quently a more earneſt and zealous Concern for the Continuance of them.

What particular Deliverances the Pſalmiſt refers to in the Text, it is not very eaſy to know, nor material to enquire; that *David* and *Iſrael* had received a great many, we learn from holy Writ, and it is the Duty of true Piety to aſcribe all ſuch to an over-ruling Providence. But there are ſome Preſervations in which the Arm of the Almighty is more apparently viſible, as when great Dangers are eſcaped, which came unexpected, and unprovided againſt, or elſe in ſo overbearing and terrible a manner, as to be, tho' ſeen, yet in human Appearance and by natural Means irreſiſtible.

It is certain that the Words before us are very applicable to the Nature of thoſe Mercies for which the Tribes of our *Iſrael* are this Day aſſembled and met together to return Praiſe to God. For whether we regard the Greatneſs of the Dangers wherewith we were encompaſſed, the hopeleſs Condition we were in while we lay ſurrounded with them, or the ſurpriſing and unexpected Preſervation wherewith we were reſcued, it may very truly and properly enough be ſaid of this Day's double Deliverance, that *the merciful and*

and gracious Lord hath so done his marvellous Works, that they ought to be had in remembrance.

In discoursing upon which Words with regard to our present Occasion, there are these three things to be considered, *viz.*

1*st*, What were the Mischiefs preparing for us, and the Dangers wherewith we were encompassed.

2*dly*, For what Reasons our Preservation and Escape must be acknowledged to be the marvellous Work of God, and owing to the Goodness of his Providence. And,

3*dly*, By what Methods we may best express a grateful Remembrance of these Mercies.

As to the first of these, *i. e.* the Mischiefs preparing for us, they were two memorable Conspiracies of one and the same Enemy; the former of which our Fathers have declared unto us, and of the latter many of us have been Eye-witnesses, and the Aim and Intent of both was to deprive us of

our

our Civil Rights, and to enſlave our Conſciences.

It was the Unhappineſs of the Chriſtian Church to continue uncorrupt but a ſhort Time, and after a few Centuries to be polluted with falſe Doctrines and ſuperſtitious Practices, by the help of which, and a Succeſſion of many dark Ages, the *Romiſh* Prelate found Means to aggrandize himſelf, aſſuming the Style and Title of Chriſt's Vicar General upon Earth, boaſting of an infallible Spirit and an uncontrollable Power, and claiming an univerſal Juriſdiction over all the Principalities, the Kingdoms and Empires of the World.

And this uſurped Authority was ſo impeiouſly executed, its Encroachments became at length ſo exorbitant, and its Tyranny ſo inſufferable, that in the 16th Century ſeveral Kingdoms and States, for the Reformation of Religion and the reſcuing their Civil Rights, were obliged to throw off the Yoke of his pretended Holineſs, to renounce his Juriſdiction, and aſſert their own Independency in all Cauſes, as well Eccleſiaſtical as Civil.

From which Time a cruel Spirit of Revenge has with implacable Hatred purſued the

the Professors of the reformed Religion, and above all, as the strongest Bulwark of the Gospel, and ablest Defenders of the Faith, the *British* Church and Nation, and all kinds of Evils which the Craft and Subtilty of the Devil or Man could invent have been formed against them. Many were the Attempts of the Emissaries of Darkness to restore their fallen Empire, they waded thro' a Sea of the Blood of our holy Martyrs, and by their repeated Conspiracies made the Crown, for several Reigns, totter upon the Heads of our reforming Princes; but being still unsuccessful, and wearied with Disappointments, and fired with a desperate Rage, they projected at last such an Enterprize as would make sure Work, and would not need to be repeated, by destroying, as was intended, at one Blast, the Royal Family, the Nobles of the Land, the Fathers of the Church, and the Representatives of the whole Nation, all at once. So little did the blind and furious Zeal of these pretended Disciples of the Gospel suffer them to consider *what Spirit they were of*, that *the Wrath of Man worketh not the Righteousness of God*, and that *our Lord and Master came not into the World to destroy Mens Lives, but to save them*

The other Deliverance which we alſo this Day commemorate, was of a much later date, and of a different kind, *i. e.* not from a ſecret and clandeſtine Plot, but from open Popiſh Tyranny and Arbitrary Power. For when the Councils of *Rome* had poſſeſſed themſelves of our Supreme Authority, and with an eager Impatience endeavoured to deſtroy the Purity of our *Sion* and the Peace and Freedom of our *Jeruſalem*; when the Statutes of our Realm were vacated by a diſpenſing Power, our Nurſeries of Learning converted into Popiſh Seminaries, and Maſs-Houſes erected in our Cities, and all this carried on with an high Hand, and ſupported in Defiance of our Conſtitution by an illegal arbitrary Force, it was on this Day that the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God timely interpoſed in our extreme Danger, by giving the Prince of *Orange* a ſafe Arrival in our Land, and making all Oppoſition fall before him till he became our King and Governor.

Which of theſe two Deliverances was the moſt conſiderable is a doubtful Point to determine, it is certain that the Contrivers and Inſtruments of both Treaſons were from the ſame Quarter, that the Succeſs of either of them

them would have been the Deſtruction of theſe Nations, and that to the Providential Diſappointment of them is owing the Preſervation of our eſtabliſhed Church and legal Government.

To the former of theſe Mercies we are indebted that the reformed Religion was not entirely cruſhed and extinguiſhed, and the Proteſtant Name long ſince forgotten in theſe Realms, or remembred only with a ſuperſtitious Abhorrence; to the latter that our National Liberties, and thoſe of all *Europe*, eſcaped the Chains and Fetters that were prepared for them. The noble Stand made in Defence of our Civil and Religious Freedom by our Deliverer *of ever glorious Memory*, the Proſperity and Triumphs of our late victorious Sovereign, the happy Eſtabliſhment of his preſent Majeſty (whom God long preſerve) upon the *Britiſh* Throne, and the Hopes we have of tranſmitting theſe Bleſſings to our lateſt Poſterity in a Proteſtant and numerous Royal Family, are in Juſtice to be aſcribed to the Providential Interpoſals and repeated Deliverances of this memorable Day.

Having thus explained the firſt thing to be ſpoken to, *viz.* What were the Miſchiefs preparing for us, and the Dangers where-

with we were encompaſſed, I come now to conſider, 2*dly*, For what Reaſons our Preſervation and Eſcape muſt be acknowledged to be the marvellous Work of God, and owing to the Goodneſs of his Providence.

It is indeed a Suppoſition not at all unreaſonable, that God, who made the World, exerciſes a general Government over it; for he may be concluded to do ſo from his Intent in creating Men, the Knowledge he has of their Affairs, his Power over them, and his Concern for them. But in the Inſtances before us there are more than common Evidences that our Preſervation is to be aſcribed wholly to a watchful and kind Providence, by reaſon of the Concealment and Secrecy of the former Conſpiracy, and the Force and Power of the latter.

The Gunpowder-Treaſon Plot was formed and carried on with the utmoſt Precaution, and ſo warily, as to be diſcerned by none but that Being to whom all Hearts be open, all Deſires known, and from whom no Secrets are hid. It was the Power of God that work'd in thoſe Conſpirators Hearts an unſeaſonable Fit of Compaſſion, which brought to Light that dark Deſign and hidden Myſtery of Iniquity.

And

And as this Treaſon had, without the Eye of Providence, been paſt finding out, ſo the other had, without the Arm of the Almighty, been irreſiſtible. For *the Adverſaries of our Sion were then chief, and her Enemies proſperous*, her Gates were defenceleſs, and her Perſecutors exalted to the higheſt Stations. Some within her Walls allowed only of the paſſive Expedient of Prayers and Tears to work upon an unrelenting and inexorable Enemy; and others, who thought that a legal Right implied a Liberty to defend that Right, were kept in awe by *Roman* Legions. In this our extreme Danger *God viſited and redeemed his People*, and by ſending a then welcome Deliverer, *filled our Hearts again with Joy and Gladneſs, and put a Song of Thankſgiving into our Mouths, for his having turned away our Captivity, and let us ſee our Deſire upon our Enemies.*

Such have been our Obligations to the divine Providence for the Mercies of this Day, to its Knowledge for the former, to its Power for the latter, and to its Goodneſs for them both; but it is very obvious to reflect, that both we and our Fathers have either not underſtood this, or very little regarded it. For inſtead of Returns of Duty for the former Deliverance, the Miſchief in vain attempted

by

by foreign Emiſſaries, was ſhortly after brought to paſs by domeſtick Conſpirators. That Government which eſcaped the Powder Plot, was overturned as effectually by popular Tumults and unnatural Rebellions. And the Walls of our *Sion*, againſt which the Powers of *Rome* could not prevail, were in a ſhort time perfidiouſly undermined at Home, its Beauty was defaced, its Sanctuary polluted, and its Honour laid low in the Duſt.

Inſtead of a Return of Duty for the latter Preſervation, how ſoon did ungrateful Men fly in the Face of their Deliverer? His Cares, his Toils and Hazards, were either quickly forgotten or miſrepreſented; his Adminiſtration was aſperſed, his Councils blackned, his Right-hand diſarmed, his Patience tired out, and his diſconſolate Heart brought down at length with Sorrow to the Grave.

And does the Hiſtory of our Ingratitude end here, or can we forbear lamenting its ſtill freſher Inſtances? The Providential Acceſſion of that illuſtrious Family to the Throne, which we promiſed ourſelves would be the compleating of our Settlement, and *the Stability of our Times*, which was heretofore the admired Theme of our Panegyricks, the Burthen of our Addreſſes, and the Object

of

of all our Concern and Vigilance, instead of being acknowledged, as it ought, with an Increase of Piety to God, and Fidelity to his Vicegerent, has been undermined by the foulest Treachery, and assaulted by the basest Revilings, the most impudent and undeserved Calumnies; has in so few Years already experienced the open Rebellion and repeated Conspiracies of its Enemies, and what is more to be regretted, the Disunion and Alienation of its Friends.

The wisest of our Patriots long ago foresaw what the weakest amongst us may have been since taught by Experience, that a Popish Sovereign is never to be trusted with the Government of this Church and Nation. As well may the Sheep commit themselves to the Protection of the Wolf, or the Fowls of the Air make choice of the Hawk or Kite for their Defender. Is it not sufficient that the Experiment has been twice unfortunately tried, and as many times convinced us of our Folly? Have not our Fathers recorded in Letters of Blood the Insincerity of Popish Promises, and how plentiful a Share of Fire and Faggots was allotted to those who advanced their Persecutor to the Throne, on an Assurance given of *making no Alteration in Religion?*

Or

Or can we ourſelves forget what was once ſo freſh in our Memories, that they who had been no Excluſioners, who profeſſed an unlimited Submiſſion, and who even bore Arms in Defence of their Popiſh King, after all theſe Steps taken, for refuſing to take the laſt, and give up their Religion, were inſulted as the vileſt Rebels, had their *Church of England Loyalty* derided and made a Mock at, and were doomed to *feel the Weight of their Sovereign's Diſpleaſure*, and but for this Day's forgotten Deliverance, had felt it with a Vengeance?

If theſe Leſſons of our own Hiſtory and Experience be not a ſufficient Warning to us, let us be taught at leaſt by the Conduct of our Adverſaries, who are ſo much *wiſer in their Generation*. Let the Popiſh Nation be ſhewn us that permits a Proteſtant Prince to rule over them, or the Popiſh Sovereign that is a Defender of the Proteſtant Faith, or can be reſtrained by the moſt ſolemn Oaths from aiming at its Extirpation. The Demand would be too extravagant to require an Example of a Popiſh Country in full Poſſeſſion of their Religion, and under the Government of a gracious Prince of their own Perſuaſion, ſo ridiculouſly *given to change*, as to expoſe

their

their Lives and Fortunes, and run all the Hazards of a treasonable Conspiracy, to make a Protestant Ruler Lord over them.

But not to enlarge further in Complaints of this nature on a Day dedicated to and set apart for Praise and Thanksgiving; instead of dwelling upon what have been the Fruits and Consequences, I shall chuse rather to observe, 3*dly*, What ought to be the proper Returns for such Interposals of Providence; and I shall mention three only, which are these following, *viz.*

Our having the Gratitude to acknowledge them.

Our thanking God for them. And,

Our endeavouring to deserve them.

Should a professed Papist assert neither of the Events of this Day to have been Deliverances, but on the contrary, that our Nation would have been happier without them, he'd speak as became him, consistently with himself, and not at all out of Character. For according to his Teachers, *Evil may be done that Good may come of it*; Faith may be broken with Hereticks, they may be extirpated any manner of way, and to do so by them is meritorious. But for a Disciple of our Church, who professes to abhor such

Principles, and is ever ſo little acquainted with the Hiſtory of the foregoing Age, to be deluded to think that the former of theſe was no Plot, or that in the latter Caſe our National Conſtitution was in no Danger, is ſuch an abſurd and implicit Credulity, as would much better become another Religion; he would be very well qualified to believe Falſhoods of any Size, who can bring himſelf to disbelieve Truths ſo well atteſted and notorious.

The Reaſonableneſs of returning Thanks to God for ſuch Preſervations, ariſes from the Conſideration that they are the Effects of his Providence. What in common Speech we call lucky Accidents, as alſo the Evils, which we term Miſchances, are all of them in Propriety and Strictneſs to be defined Providential Diſpenſations. Man has indeed the Faculties of Reaſon, and a due Meaſure of Bodily Strength given him for his Preſervation, but theſe are of little Service to account for Deliverances from Evils ſo concealed as to eſcape his Knowledge, or ſo powerful as by his natural Force not to be withſtood, and the Mercies of this Day being evidently ſuch, there is doubtleſs a Return of Praiſe and Honour due to Almighty God for the happy Preſervation. And

And tho' *to tell of his Wonders with our Lips*, and *to employ our Mouths in shewing forth the Operations of his Hands*, be a Duty that ought not to be left undone, yet the most pleasing and acceptable way of acknowledging such Mercies is by our endeavouring to deserve them, by striving all of us in our different Ranks and Capacities to promote the Peace and Prosperity of that Government, and to do Honour to the Faith, and live up to the Precepts of that holy Religion which our gracious God has, on several Occasions, so marvellously preserved to us.

The Care of Providence employed so often and so critically in our behalf, may perhaps give us the Vanity to imagine, that its miraculous Interposals are what we have a Right to by Prescription, and that it will always be as ready to watch over and secure a Religion free from Indecency and Superstition, and a Government without Tyranny or Servitude, to us and our Posterity. But the grievous Instances of our Ingratitude, our spreading and barefac'd Infidelity, our almost universal Corruption, our needless, and yet incurable, Divisions, the Virulence and deadly Poison of our Tongues, and the too frequent Disregard to our most solemn

Oaths, ſhould convince us to our Sorrow, that there is no Scourge of Affliction, nor any Judgment in all the Stores of divine Vengeance that is greater than our Crimes.

Would we indeed ſeriouſly make it the Buſineſs of our Lives to ſhew forth by anſwerable Returns the Remembrance and grateful Senſe we have of ſuch divine Mercies as we this Day commemorate, we might then, without Preſumption, entertain a reaſonable Hope that the ſame good Providence will always be propitious to us, will either not permit us to fall into ſuch Dangers for the Time to come, or if we ſhould be again encompaſſed with them, will be ready always with the like marvellous Loving-Kindneſs to make a way for us that we may be able to eſcape them.

That the Councils of *Rome* ſhould be ever attempting to diſturb our Peace, and labouring to bring us back again into Bondage, ought neither to be Matter of Surprize nor Concern to us. The fiercer Aſſaults we ſuſtain from that Quarter, the ſurer Teſtimony we have of the Wiſdom and Fidelity of our Adminiſtration; that our Prince is ſteady to the Intereſt of our Laws and Religion, and his Counſellors firm to the Proteſtant

teſtant Cauſe, and of an unſhaken Integrity. The moſt renowned of our reforming Governours have all along experienced the reſtleſs Attempts of theſe implacable Adverſaries, have gained Glory by the Oppoſition, and more firmly eſtabliſhed their Crowns by defeated Conſpiracies; and till *Babylon the Great be fallen, and the Mother of Abominations* be no more, may the Sovereign that ſits upon the *Britiſh* Throne, and the Nobles that ſurround it, be always honoured with ſuch Enmity. May there never be wanting in this illuſtrious Aſſembly an Integrity and Honour equal to their Rank and Dignity, a Contempt of Popiſh Superſtition, and an Abhorrence of its Tyranny, a Deteſtation of perfidious Traytors, and an undaunted and indefatigable Zeal in Defence of the beſt of Kings, the pureſt Religion, and the happieſt Government.

And may the Example and Influence of ſuch truly noble Patriots inſpire and animate every inferior Order and Degree amongſt us, to maintain inviolably and watch over with the utmoſt Vigilance that deareſt Pledge and moſt valuable Legacy of our Anceſtors, which was obtained by the Sufferings and Conſtancy of our holy Martyrs, and has

been preſerved at the Expence of ſo much Blood and Treaſure of our own, and which, if we are not wanting to ourſelves, might be ſafe and happy under that Guardian and Defender of our Faith, whoſe Progenitors have been Champions of the Reformation Abroad, and who himſelf was the neareſt Allied to our Crown of all the Proteſtant Royal Family; whoſe Reign has been unexceptionably legal and indulgent, and whoſe numerous and hopeful Iſſue promiſe an Entail of Bleſſings on theſe Realms for many ſucceeding Ages.

We have indeed no other Foundation to build our Hopes upon; the Security of our Civil Freedom and Holy Religion is ſo interwoven with that of the Settlement of our Government, their Intereſts are ſo inſeparable, that they muſt ſtand or fall together; and nothing can be more abſurd, than to pretend to reconcile any true Concern for the former, with a Diſaffection to the latter.

To be *zealouſly affected* in ſo good a Cauſe as that of our eſtabliſhed Religion, is highly honourable and Praiſe-worthy; and may the Bleſſing of God always go along with ſuch Zeal, that it may *abound more and more*, and ever be *according to Knowledge*; for then

all

all who have a real Value for our *Sion*, and ſincerely wiſh the Peace of our *Jeruſalem*, as they agree in the End aimed at, the Preſervation of our Church, will concur likewiſe in the only Means of effecting it, and will diſcern clearly that they can no way ſo profitably ſerve the Cauſe they are engaged in, as by ſupplicating the Almighty with an undiſſembled Loyalty, and from the bottom of their Hearts, to be our gracious Sovereign's Defender and Keeper, to *hide him from the gathering together of the Froward, and the Inſurrection of wicked Doers*; to weaken the Hands, blaſt the Deſigns, and defeat the Enterpriſes of all his Enemies; that no ſecret Conſpiracies nor open Violences may ſhorten his auſpicious Reign; and that there may never be wanting one of his Houſe to ſucceed him in the Government of theſe Kingdoms. So we who have been, on ſo many Occaſions, God's favoured People, and as it were the choſen *Sheep of his Paſture*, being hurt by no Perſecutions, may for ever give him Thanks, and be always ſhewing forth his Praiſe from Generation to Generation.

Grant this, we beſeech thee moſt merciful Father, for Jeſus Chriſt's Sake, our Mediator and Redeemer. Amen.

BRITISH MUSEUM

k

Bible. New Test. Epistles of St. Paul.

843. L. 1.